A

SERMON

AT THE

Warwick-ſhire MEETING,

November 25, 1679.

A T

S. *Mary-le-Bow* in *Cheapſide*, *London*.

By *William Baſſet*, Rector of *Brinklow*, in *Warwick-ſhire*.

LONDON,

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TO THE

Right Worſhipful Sir ROBERT VINER, *Baronet, and Alderman of the City of* London.

CErtainly this Meeting juſtly claims a place among the conſiderable Benefits our Country doth enjoy, not only in regard of the correſpondence the ſeveral members of it, that are removed to this City, hold one with another; but eſpecially that by this means ſo many Plants are yearly removed from the barren parts of it to this richer Soil, where they are pruned and dreſſed, and having depth and fatneſs of earth grow into Trees, that yield Profit and Beauty to the whole.

Nor is the advantage ſmall to thoſe, whoſe Lot doth not fall in this pleaſant place: ſince the Country is yearly eaſed of ſo many, who, by reaſon of ill Circumſtances, would be rather a Burden, than advantage to their Neighbours; eſpecially thoſe places that have more Hands than Work; where Men ſtand idle, perhaps, for no other reaſon, but becauſe *none have hired them.* And I have ſometimes known a Town at great expence, both of

time and Mony to keep out, it may be, some single person from being an Inhabitant, because they had more than they could employ before. And where the younger do increase, the more ancient, while yet serviceable, being left without employ, are necessarily supported by the Contributions of the place. And in *Corporations*, and *Market-towns*, where some might have crept into little Trades, this is already divided into so many hands, that (some few in a Town excepted) they have little else to do, but to open and shut the Windows of their Shops, and when they have shut, are scarce able to set and keep them open. Whence we may take some measures of the Benefit, the Country doth receive from this Company. For should they lay down so good a Work, our poor, and therefore our payments would increase; more would die indebted to the world, leave Charge behind them, and each way oppress the living: and the business of all private and publick Sessions would yearly increase.

Therefore certainly all the Inhabitants of that place are bound in point of policy, and reason, if not of duty too (according to their several Capacities) to encourage and maintain so good a Work. Especially the *Gentry*, whose Abilities, Divertisements, or other Concerns, calling them so oft to

Town,

Town, give them so fair an opportunity: especially considering these Benefits reach even the *high places* themselves are yet in. For *Landlords thrive best, where Tenants prosper.* And *Rents* usually fall, where the poor, and therefore payments, do increase. I must therefore impute it to the non-consideration of these things, and perhaps, in some to the want of Generous and Publick Spirits, or at least to the not kindling those Sparks of Virtue into a frame of Love, and Bounty, which (however Titles go) are *essential to a Gentleman,* that we are in this Affair so far left by those whose presence would be an Honour to the Company, a Glory to the place of their Nativity, and would give new life and vigour to the business of this Assembly, *Great Bodies move the lesser.* And good Leaders in that Contribution, which is not (as some suppose) for the Stewards Pockets, but towards the Binding Children out to Trades, by their very example gain more from others, than the Sums themselves do give can amount to. And the more is thus collected, the more the Stewards are incouraged to a free and large addition; that for their own Fame, and the Childrens Good they may place them to the better Trades, which often proves as great a kindness, as the setting them out to any: for sometimes ingenuity is forced to creep, when it might run high, if placed in a better Circumstance.

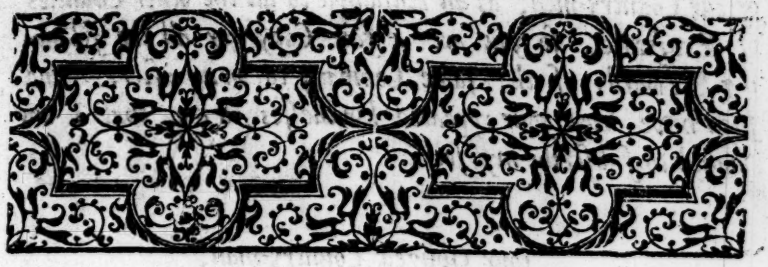
cumstance. And since the want of publick Spirits prove a decay to a whole Society, to particular Companies, and smaller Bodies; we are the more obliged, where we find them, to pay them due respects, and give a just applause. And since *such a spirit* appears so eminently in your self, not only from your publick Works and Monuments in the City, and our County Town of *Warwick*, in which your name shall live to future ages (*He loves our nation, and hath built a synagogue*) &c. But also from the Incouragement you are pleased to give this charitable Work: in having formerly vouchsafed to be Steward of this Company; and in the Yearly Honour you do it by your presence, not suffering any business, no, not the Burden, as well as Honour, you sustain'd, when *Lord Major* of this City, to deliver you from it; I thought my self in duty bound, by this Dedication, to let you know the Honour and Respects our Country ows you, as well as him, who is

Your Worships

Humble Orator,

And Servant,

W. Basset.



T O

Mr. { Richard Chandler,
Job Vere,
Thomas Graſſingham,
Henry Marſhal,
John Skipwith,
William Brown,
George Shettleworth,
Richard Elborow. } *Stewards.*

WEll, your Charge and Trouble now is moſtly over; but your Honour and Rewards, for having been Benefactors to your Country, ſtill remain; and I hope, may outlive the Funerals of Time. For indeed you are able to give ſo good an Account of your Stewardſhip, *that, as many as look upon this Meeting*

of

of our Country-men, as an Ensample to all the other Counties of England, *so you are a fair Copy for all the following Stewards of the same Company to write after. And such have been your repeated kindnesses to me, that I am bound to subscribe my self*

Your Obliged Country-man,

And Servant.,

W. Basset.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

Warwick-ſhire MEETING,

November 25, 1679.

ROM. 12. 1.

I beſeech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reaſonable ſervice.

IN the Foregoing Chapters the Apoſtle hath diſcourſed ſome things, which the largeneſs of our Subject will not ſuffer us to look into: and from which the Text is a concluſion, and for that reaſon is uſhered in with the Illative *Therefore.*]

I beſeech you [*therefore.*]

In the words themſelves we ſhall obſerve

1. A kind and familiar compellation, *Brethren.*

2. An earneſt Supplication: I *beſeech you.*

3. A farther inforcement of the matter in hand: *By the mercies of God.*

I beſeech you, brethren, by the mercies of God.

4. The ſubject matter of this Diſcourſe, *That ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.* And

5. The equity and meetneſs of the thing, *Which is your reaſonable ſervice.*

I beſeech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reaſonable ſervice.

I begin with the

1. *Brethren.*

We once all lay in that common matter, which *Moſes* calls the void and formleſs earth, and others expreſs by their *materia prima*; ſome by ὕλη, and others by ὕδωρ. Which though without form, was yet ſuſceptive of any the great Creator ſhould pleaſe to impreſs upon it. Out of this Infinite Power and Wiſdom did produce all earthly Beings, and gave them a Law and Power of propogating their ſeveral kinds. Whence all Mankind were taken out of the ſame common matter, had all the ſame Maker; for which reaſon the Poet calls them,

Chara Dei Soboles——

The Off-ſping of God. And are all deſcended from the ſame common Parents, which are the firſt, and moſt general grounds of this Relation.

And when it pleaſed God by confuſion of Languages (thereby turning ſin into an univerſal Bleſſing) to neceſſitate men to divide themſelves into many little Bodies, according to their ſeveral Tongues, and ſo to diſperſe themſelves over the face of the whole earth, that there might be the more room, incouragements and neceſſity of Propagation; and that the ſeveral parts of the earth, by the induſtry of men, might communicate their good things one to another; whereupon mankind became diverſified, as to Speech, Sentiments, Manners and Cuſtoms of Life, according

according to the ſeveral Climes they did inhabit, and other circumſtances they were placed in; yet they of the ſame Body were knit together by a nearer Relation, than thoſe of different Societies.

And, as one ſpeaks,

Jam cuncti gens una ſumus ——

Noting that a new and nearer Relation doth ariſe upon the union of two different Nations, and therefore the ſeveral particulars of the ſame Nation are more nearly related, than thoſe of different Societies be.

And when the ſame Country upon certain occaſions, and for divers reaſons, hath fallen under ſeveral diviſions, as *Pariſhes*, *Tythingries*, *Hundreds* and *Shires*, they of the ſame part are more nearly related, than thoſe of different Diviſions. Nor doth a new, or nearer relation ariſe ſolely from the place of our Birth, but of our education, from our ſeveral Callings, Trades and other Circumſtances.

And if we look upon men as linked together in a Sacred Society, we have all *one faith*, *one baptiſm*, *one hope*, *one God and Father of all*: whence we are ſaid to be *Heirs of God*, and *Co-heirs with Chriſt*. And thus conſidered, we are all under the ſame Head, make up one and the ſame Body, which is the Church; and are Members one of another. This is the beſt, and moſt Honourable of all Relations; which the ancient Chriſtians were ready upon all occaſions to expreſs by the term of *Brother* and *Siſter*. However of late it is fallen under reproach, and is ſeldom uſed, unleſs in Drollery, by reaſon it hath been ſo horribly abuſed by unreaſonable pretenders to Purity, and is made as a Characteriſtical difference, whereby to diſtinguiſh different Parties and Factions.

So various and manifold are the Grounds and Reaſons of this Relation, that there are no men, but what upon ſome accounts or other are Brethren. And by how many the more ways we are ſo related, by ſo many the more indearments we have one to another, and obligations to mutual love and kindneſs.

This term hath been ſometimes uſed, not only to a good end, but with good ſucceſs too. For when the *Romans* were in Mutiny.

tiny, and ready to tumult, they were all appeased and hushed into silence, by this one word *Quirites*, by which they were reminded they were all of the same Country, and had the same Captain, and Founder.

To the like purpose, though not with like success, did *Moses* wage it, when he saw two Jews, Men of the same Nation, and same Religion contending together, *Act.* 7. 26. *Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?*

Sometimes it is used to usher in a reproof, which otherwise might be apt to move some unruly passions, *Jam.* 1. 16. *Do not err, my beloved brethren.*

And otherwhiles to sweeten and smooth men into a more easie and ready reception of some important duty; which is the design and business of it in the Text,

I beseech you, brethren,—— that ye present your bodies, &c.

Whence we come to the second part of the Text,

I beseech you.

S. *Paul* was one of the greatest of the Apostles, in regard of his extraordinary, and immediate Call from Heaven, his Sufferings, his Labours, his Revelations, and his Learning, having been brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, and skilled in all the Learning of the *Jews*. Yet writing to the *Romans*, who were but newly converted from Heathenism; and amongst whom there were many weak Christians, who were still intangled in the Rudiments of the World, and were subject to Ordinances: being so far from using their liberty, as a Cloak and Plea for Sin, as the manner of some is, that they suffered much for not understanding it, yet appears as their humble Supplicant,

I beseech you.

Which great condescension himself takes notice of to the *Corinthians*, 2. *Ep.* 10. 11. *I Paul my self beseech you.* Which form of speech is never used, unless in these, and such like Cases.

1. To express the vehemency of the speaker, and to shew the whole Soul is taken up, and filled with an earnest desire of succeeding in the affair before him. No Rhetorick so winning as such a passionate and courtly insinuation, which seems enough to melt down the affections, and form them to the mold, and methods of such an Orator.

2. When

2. When the truth propoſed, or duty preſſed upon us, is of grand importance and concern, as *Epheſ* 4. 1. *I beſeech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.* The matter of which exhortation compriſes all the Duties of Chriſtian Religion; and therefore juſtly calls for ſo earneſt an importunity. For, as it is matter of prudence, as well as duty, to proportion our love, deſire, and hope, according to the meaſures of good, that are in the things to which they are terminated; ſo it is all the reaſon in the world, that the Orator and Divine ſhould ſuit his pains to the nature of the Subject: which is but like the giving a price according to the uſefulneſs and worth of the thing purchaſed. And indeed Nature and Revelation ſomewhat neceſſitate to do ſo. For the leſs things concern us, the leſs capable they are of truth: as may be inſtanced in the plurality of worlds, the motion of the earth, the reaſon of the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, and the riſe of the River *Nilus*: and the remoter things are from the life, and eſſence of Religion, ſtill the more controverſial, as appears from the manner of the traduction of Original Sin, the perpetual Virginity of the bleſſed *Mary*, &c. In which kind of points a man cannot be mighty earneſt in preſſing your belief, becauſe the nature of the Subject will bear but little, if any certainty or weight, But where things are of ſome great importance, there nature is more plain and ſatisfactory, and ſo is Revelation too: for whatever is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, whether it be matter of faith or practiſe, is ſuited to the mode of all capacities. Theſe ſo eaſily appear plain and reaſonable, and the inducements to them ſo ſtrong and weighty, that they both afford good ground for importunity; and likewiſe ſo warm the affections, and move the Speaker, that he is uſually cloſe and preſſing. Therefore when the Apoſtle is putting us upon this great and reaſonable part of our Religion, *viz.* the preſenting our Bodies a Sacrifice to God, he both commands and courts us to it:

I beſeech you, that ye preſent your bodies, &c.

3. It may be further uſed, where men are not eaſily brought to comply with the matter propoſed.

There are ſome things indeed ſo readily received, and ſo tenaciouſly held by many men, that ſcarce any thing is able to check

their

their belief, or restrain from the practice of them, and such be the darling conceits of the lawfulness of resisting the lawful Magistrate, and of seeking our own preservation in forbidden, and therefore in unlawful ways: which must be accounted to proceed from their agreeableness to vile affections, and the debaucheries of nature. Whereas the clearest truths and indispensable duties, though indeed the more they are so, the more agreeable they be to natural light, and the reasons of men, as the resisting and mortifying our own corruptions, yet still they are not so easily received, and reduced to practice. But we have more need of undeniable arguments, and an importunate zeal to convince and perswade their reception, than others have to put off their false and counterfeit Wares. The reason of which is, these suit with evil inclinations, and therefore are easily received: while they are against, and for that reason opposed by natural corruptions; in the one, that enemy of all good helps forward, in the other, he endeavours to hinder us either in the whole, or in part; or else in the motive or end of our faith, or action. Therefore the Apostle might the more earnestly press us to the presenting our Bodies, that by such means he might overcome all oppositions, and thereupon perswade men to captivate their thoughts to the belief, and submit themselves to the practice of so great a Duty.

I beseech you, brethren.

And lest this should be too little, he adds,

4. A further inforcement of the same thing:

By the mercies of God.

I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God.

By which he means all those things, that the Ancients comprised under those three Heads:

1. The Goods of Fortune, as our Estates and Enjoyments in the world, which make our lives a blessing, and without which to live, would be at present to be miserable.

2. The Goods of the Body, as Health, Strength, Perfection, and due proportion of Parts.

3. The Goods of the Mind, as the use of all our Faculties, whereby we are able to reason, discourse and distinguish between good and evil, and make provision against present and future Exigencies. All which are so valuable, we know not what price

to

to ſet upon them; and the want of any one of them would neceſſarily infer the preſence of ſome great evil.

Nay, theſe Mercies include all thoſe good and perfect gifts, which come down from the Father of Lights; the Redemption of the World, and that by a price of infinite value, as the giving his Son, and that to all the ſinleſs infirmities of humane nature, which ſpeaks the purchaſe, the juſt admiration of Men and Angels: that Omnipotency it ſelf ſhould condeſcend to be carried in the Arms of a feeble Woman! That he, who ſate on the Throne of Heaven, ſhould vouchſafe to lie in a dirty Manger! That he, whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, ſhould be wrapt up in Swadling Cloaths! That he, who gave life and being to all things, ſhould lay down his life for the worſt of Sinners! That Love it ſelf ſhould ſit on a Thorny Bough, dying even for thoſe that killed it! and to perfect the wonder, that this muſt be a death the moſt painful and ignominious in the world! That he ſhould ever live, as the Scripture ſpeaks, to make interceſſion for us, as if it was the ſole end of his life to plead *our* Cauſe in Heaven!

And when after all we have lived unſuitable to his Mercies, that he ſhould yet continue the means of Grace, and Tenders of Salvation, and purſue us with all the glorious propoſals of Bliſs and Happineſs! That he ſhould ſtrive with us by natural conſcience, the motions and whiſpers of the bleſſed Spirit, as if he reſolved to take no denyal, but would even force himſelf, and eternal Glories on us: theſe are Mercies of the greateſt magnitude, the moſt winning endearments that love and kindneſs can lay upon us! Obligations that ſhould make us plyable to all the ſignifications of the Divine Will, and to turn our hands and hearts to every duty; eſpecially conſidering the great deſign of them is, both to oblige, and alſo to inable us to a pious, and an holy life, for which cauſe the Apoſtle argues from them to the duty before us.

I beſeech you by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies, &c. which is the fourth part of the Text, *viz.* the ſubject of the Diſcourſe.

That ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.

This is an alluſion to the Law of Sacrifices under the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation,

Dispensation, of which we shall observe some few things, that we may the better understand this Phrase, and the Duties it requires of us, as

1. The perfection of those things that were to be offered to God, they must be the best of their kind: *Levit.* 22. 19,20,21. *Ye shall offer a male* [*without blemish*] *of the beeves, and of the sheep, and of the goats. But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you.* And *Mal.* 1. 14. God lays a curse upon him, that shall presume to offer him a *corrupt thing*.

Now as these Sacrifices were typical of something that was to be under the Gospel, *viz.* that immaculate Sacrifice of the blessed Jesus, which he was once to make for our Sins, whence he is called the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the World. So the perfection of them taught the purity, which God required of them that should offer themselves unto him under each Dispensation. That God, who would not allow of imperfections in the things offered, would by no means suffer the blemishes of Sin in the persons offering. For this is a greater provocation than the other, for that teaches the necessity of this: therefore as such Sacrifices were rejected, so were such Sacrificers too. And sometimes the spotless Offering was abhorred for the spots of him that offered it: *Isai.* 1. 11. to vers. 16. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination*, &c. The reason of which is *vers.* 15. *Your hands are full of blood.*

Now by this allusion the Apostle shews that the Sacrifices under the Gospel must be pure, which he expresses by that word *holy*; and because our Sacrifices now must be our persons, and not our beasts, he adds a *living sacrifice*, in opposition to the dead ones under the Law; therefore it is plain, that he that comes unto God, must come with a Conscience purged from dead works, and refined, as far as is possible, from all the dross and imperfections of corrupted nature. The necessity of which we are sometimes taught by more proper expressions, 2 *Cor* 7. 1. *Let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; perfecting Holiness.*

Thus

Thus we muſt imitate that firſt good, and reach after ſome participations of the Divine Nature; becoming *holy as the Lord our God is holy*: and *perfect even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect*. That ſo there may be ſome congruity and ſuitableneſs between God and thoſe that worſhip him; and indeed this is the great condition of finding acceptance: for as God would not accept of a blemiſhed Sacrifice, ſo the Text expreſly declares, that we muſt preſent our ſelves a Sacrifice *holy*, if ever we mean to be *acceptable* to him.

That ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.

2. Theſe Sacrifices were made, and offered to God, which was part of the Divine Worſhip. And this *viz. Worſhip* is a ſtanding and perpetual Duty.

Though the *Modus* be changed, yet the thing ſtill remains.

Therefore in that very place where our Saviour rejects the Temple, and the Service peculiar to it, he yet retains Worſhip ſtill, and thereby makes it a Goſpel-duty; *Joh.* 4. 23. The true *Worſhipers* ſhall *worſhip*. And the Father ſeeks ſuch to *worſhip* him. So S. *Paul*, Tit. 2. 12. compriſes all Religion under theſe three Heads, *viz.*

1. *Sobriety*, which includes the Duties we owe to our ſelves, and forbids all intemperance and exceſs.

2. *Righteouſneſs*, which contains all the Offices we owe to others, and is a doing to all men, as we would all men ſhould do to us. And

3. *Godlineſs*, which compriſes the ſeveral Duties we owe immediately to God, whereof *Adoration* or *Worſhip* is one, in the judgment of the Gentile World, who ever paid theſe Tributes of Honour to the Deity.

Therefore when *Epicurus*, by denying Divine Providence, took the ready courſe to rob God of his Worſhip, he was charged by others, and the better of the Philoſophers, *tollere Deos*,

in effect to deny his very existence, and run the world into right down Atheism.

And that Command that prohibits the worship of Graven Images, doth yet retain this worship as proper, and peculiar to the true God. For as God is the most excellent of all beings, so he will have something reserved for himself, which no creature shall share with him in, and this is especially Worship which is forbid to the creature, for this very reason, that it is due to God only, and that both by virtue of Precept and Eminency.

Which thing is here expressed by *presenting*, that ye *present* your bodies, *viz.* in a way of Adoration and Worship.

That Religion then must needs be lame and imperfect, which rests in some moral Virtues, but is deficient in this great point, that is willing to appear blameless to the world, but matters not by Divine Worship to give Praise and Glory to the Deity. For as it was not sufficient to the Jews to prepare their Sacrifices, but not to offer them: so neither is it sufficient for us to make our bodies a living Sacrifice, and never present them, as such, before God.

The Metaphor must hold in these two points, else it would have been improperly used, and would reach but one part of that which other Texts in the New Testament make our duty: and the word [*Present*] must be of no use and signification. Nay, a thing is not properly and strictly a Sacrifice till it be offered, or at least in offering: before, when it is prepared, it is but *for* a Sacrifice, it is the offering that makes it such.

Therefore by *presenting our bodies a sacrifice*, we are most certainly and clearly put upon the offering them to God in a way of worship: for so Sacrifices were.

And indeed one great end of Religion is to give Praise and Glory to God, which is done very much, and, perhaps, in nothing

nothing better than by worship; for in these very acts we own him the greatest, and best of all Beings; and our selves but poor and dependent creatures.

God is never more magnified by men, than when they fall down and worship him. Therefore as the worshiping the Creature is said to be a *giving God's glory to another, and his praise to graven Images*; Isa. 42. 8. So the not worshiping must needs be a with-holding from, or a denying him the same Praise and Glory. Therefore of what civil behaviour, what sober conversation, or how just soever men may be in their Societies and Commerce, yet if they do not present their bodies a living Sacrifice to God, they are no Worshipers, and therefore wanting in one of the best parts, and main ends of all Religion.

3. Sacrifices were not only offered, but in a *publick* place and manner: *Deut.16.5,6. Thou mayst not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee. But at the place which the Lord thy God shall chuse to place his name in.* Levit. 13. 3, 4. *Whatsoever man*, &c. *that kills an ox, or lamb, or goat*, &c. *and brings it not to the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering to the Lord, before the tabernacle of the Lord, blood shall be imputed to that man.* And Deut.12.17,18. *The tithe of corn, wine, oil, the firstlings of the herd, and of the flock, vows, free-will-offerings, and heave-offerings, were to be eaten before the Lord, in the place which the Lord should chuse.*

And though private Worship was required of the Jew, as well as of the Christian; yet the Old Testament, especially the Psalms, do so far prefer the publick before private worship, that a man would be almost apt to think all worship confined to this. For though *David*, when driven to and fro by *Saul*, and whilst among the Philistines, had opportunity of private Adoration, and secret Devotions, yet speaks

of himself, as driven from the presence of God, when driven from his House and publick Worship: *Psal.* 84. 1, 2. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longs, yea even faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.* Verse 3. he speaks the Swallow more happy than himself, in that, while he is absent, she is suffered to visit, and *build her nest about the altars.* Psal. 42. 1, 2. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so pants my soul after thee, O God: When shall I come and appear before God!* Now the Psalmist very well knew, he was always in the Divine Presence; and therefore *Psal.* 139. 8. to *Verse* 13. proves by an induction of particulars, that there is no place of concealment from him; not in Heaven, nor in Hell; not in the utmost parts of the Sea, nor in the darkest night; therefore *verse* 7. *Whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

Which being proposed by way of question, implies the stronger Negation.

Therefore if we will make sense of those places, we must understand the Psal. as reaching after a more than ordinary presence, which is the presence of God in places of publick worship, which all sincere worshipers do enjoy. By which kind of speeches he seems so to value the presence of God in his publick worship, that he looks upon all things, without this to be worth nothing. And certainly where there is a spiritual life wrought in us, it will discover it self by reaching after the utmost participations of divine things.

And the Gospel however a furtherer of private devotions, yet doth in an especial manner command and incourage a publick Service; as by the example of the Apostles, which as a tacite precept requires the like of us. To which end we find sometimes the place of their assembling recorded, *Act.* 1. 13, 14. *In an upper room they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.* And otherwiles the time is mentioned

mentioned, *Joh.* 20.26. *After eight days the diſciples again were within* —— which number includes two Sundays, according to a computation then in uſe, which was to take in the day from which they began their account, thereby putting two Sundays into one week. And when Chriſtians began to grow cool, and negligent in the publick preſenting their Bodies, the Author to the *Heb.* 10. 25. both reproves this growing evil, and charges others to avoid it, *not forſaking the aſſembling your ſelves together; as the manner of ſome is.* And no wonder the Scripture is ſo round in this matter, ſince the neglect of publick, moſt certainly draws after it the neglect of all private duties; therefore thoſe that exeuſe their not frequenting publick Ordinances by a pretence of ſerving God at home, are like thoſe that will have every day a Sabbath, till at laſt they keep none at all.

And good reaſon private devotions ſhould give way to publick ſervices, becauſe theſe are the moſt ordinary, and beaten road to Heaven, and a more uſual conveyance of Grace, than other Performances: For *Faith* is ſaid to come by *hearing*, and this hearing ſuch as is from Preaching. *How ſhall they hear without a Preacher*, Rom. Chriſt appeared to the firſt Chriſtians, when aſſembled together; *Joh.* 20.26. The Holy Ghoſt deſcended upon them, when *met together with one accord in one place*; Act. 2. And our Saviour promiſes, *Matth.* 18. 20. that when *two or three are met together in his name, he will be in the midſt of them.* Which muſt be underſtood in a more peculiar and eſpecial manner, than by his eſſential preſence, in regard of which he is at all times preſent with all his Creatures.

And no wonder this hath the greater bleſſing, ſince we do in this more than any other way, make a viſible profeſſion, and thereby give more praiſe and glory to God than in private, and unſeen ſervices.

Therefore

Therefore as God hath so entwisted his Honour, and our happiness together, that it is impossible to separate them, for the same Acts do both: so those acts that most advance his Glory, usually tend most to the advantage of him that doth them.

Whence the Apostle seeing these two ends best attainable by a publick worship, doth press us to *present our bodies a living sacrifice*, and therefore to present them in that way that Sacrifices were offered, which was in the most solemn, and publick manner.

4. The Text fixes this Worship on the Body, *That ye present your Bodies.* Which by a *Synechdoche partis pro toto*, is put for the whole man: That ye present your selves.

Where observe

That the Body is engaged in this work.

Though indeed there is no Text that doth expressly exclude it, yet because there is one that doth not *in terminis* include the Body, as *John* 4. 23 *The true worshipers shall worship in spirit, and in truth,*

Therefore some will have the Soul alone concerned, and not the Body at all in Divine Worship.

But as *out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaks*: so bodily worship is in, and flows from that of the spirit: nothing being more natural than outwardly to express our inward sentiments; and especially the awfulness we have of the Deity. In most ordinary cases it is judged Hypocrisie to do otherwise, and in this it cannot be without some violence offered to our selves: for it is certainly contrary to the reasons and experience of all observing men, that when we come to the place and Offices of a publick Worship, men should have any due and suitable thoughts of the presence they come before,

before, and not expreſs the ſame in outward geſtures and behaviour. I am ſure none will believe that man hath any internal or mental reverence for his Superiours, who, when in their preſence, doth not outwardly expreſs the ſame. For we meaſure the thoughts by the actions, and gueſs at the Soul by the Body.

Much more muſt we think thus in the caſe before us; for God being the greateſt, and moſt excellent of all beings, if we have worthy thoughts of him, the mind is ſo ſtruck, and the ſoul receives ſuch deep impreſſions, that we much more neceſſarily in outward geſtures diſcover the awful and reverend thoughts, we have of the Deity, than we do our reſpects to Superiors, who, being but fellow-creatures, differ from us, not in infinite, as God doth, but in ſome few and little diſtances: and doubtleſs our Saviour requiring a ſpiritual worſhip, doth as much intend that of the Body too, as thoſe Scriptures mean ſo many *perſons* that ſpeak only of ſo many *ſouls*, Gen. 12. 5. *And Abraham took Sarai his wife*, &c. *and all the Souls they had gotten*, &c.

And it ſeems very obſervable, that when men once exclude the reverence of the Body, they quickly loſe that of the Soul too: as appears from ſuch mens expreſſions, who make their prayers familiar diſcourſes with God Almighty, which muſt proceed from want of due thoughts of God, whereupon they make themſelves too much like him; or him too much like themſelves.

Neither is it any wonder that our Saviour expreſly requires a ſpiritual worſhip, rather than a bodily. Becauſe

1. This is the greater, and carries the other along with it: whereas that is the leſs, and may be, becauſe it ſometimes is without this.

2. Chriſt

2. Christ was here nulling the *Mosaick* Dispensation, which was called a *Carnal Command* Heb. 7. 16. the reason of which we find *Ch.* 9, 10. because *it stood in meats and drinks and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed upon them.*

Therefore being now to bring in a worship which rested not so much in bodily Exercises, it was most proper and subservient to this present design, to call it a spiritual worship, not only because the denomination is now taken from the major part; but also that men might hereby be prepared by taking off their minds from those carnal Ordinances, to close with the proposals of a more spiritual Law.

But yet this Text cannot in reason be supposed to exclude the body: because προσκυνέω, from whence προσκυνηταὶ, and προσκυνήσουσι, Worshipers, and shall worship, do come, signifies to kiss, which implies an act of the Body; and the *Septuagint* uses the same word to express a worship, which was for the most part bodily, *viz.* that of *Baal*, 1 King. 19. 18. *I have left me seven thausand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth,* ὁ οὐ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ, *that hath not kissed,* that is, that hath not worshiped him; and why the same word should in one place signifie a worship, which is mostly bodily: and in the other place, *viz.* this of S. *John,* should signifie a worship purely spiritual, or exclusive of the Body, I do not yet understand.

But it is a common rule in expounding Scripture, that that cannot be the meaning of one Text, which contradicts another, and such is this sense which excludes the Body from acts of worship. For in *Exod.* 20. 5. *Bowing down* the Body being the highest expression of our inward reverence; and therefore meetest for the worship of the great God, is made

made an act of Divine Worſhip, and for that very reaſon is forbid to be paid to the creatures, as repreſentations of the Deity. Therefore if we muſt not bow down to the true God, then we may bow down to Graven Images: and contrariwiſe, if we muſt not bow down to Graven Images, then we muſt bow down to the true God; and the reaſon is, becauſe it is forbid to be paid to the one, upon this very account, that it is reſerved as proper, and peculiar to the other; and therefore ſo long as it is forbid to be given to Images, ſo long it remains a debt to God, which is for ever, this Command being moral, and conſequently perpetually obliging.

It muſt needs therefore be, that thoſe men who bow down to neither, as they are no Idolaters, ſo they are no Worſhipers, and becauſe they would not be Redundants, will therefore be Defectives in their Religion. From this precept have flowed thoſe Exhortations, *Pſal.* 95. 6. *O come, let us worſhip, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our maker.* Which are no parts of the Ceremonial Law, but ſtreams from this Fountain.

And ſince God made, redeemed, and promiſed rewards to the Body, as well as the Soul, it is all the reaſon in the world he ſhould be worſhiped by both: from which Topicks that great Apoſtle argues, 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. *Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorifie God in your body, and your ſpirit, which are Gods.*

Whence we proceed to the fifth part of the Text, *viz.* the meetneſs and equity of the thing,

It is your reaſonable ſervice.

That ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,

Which is your reaſonable ſervice.

That is, a Service agreeable to the reaſons of men, and dictates of nature, abſtracting from her Corruptions.

And indeed it must needs be so, because it is a part of the natural Law. For as *Cicero* saith, *consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est. The consent of all Nations in any one thing must be reputed the law of nature.* And truly as what nature teaches, must needs be known, and spread as far as humane nature it self: so when we find all Nations agreeing in any one thing, we cannot in reason assign any other teacher of that thing but the same nature.

Now Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, did all agree in this, according to their several Modes and Capacities, that it is a most meet and reasonable thing, that we should *present our bodies a living sacrifice to God.* Whence they had their Temples, their Priests and Sacreds. And in their moral Discourses, they taught the necessity and way of rooting out Vice, and acquiring Virtue, in order to their making themselves *holy and acceptable to God.*

Neither can any think me too daring in this part of my Discourse, that considers that great and learned men hold there is nothing purely positive in the Gospel, but the two Sacraments; and some think these in part founded on nature, and reason too: because they find some shadows and footsteps of them in Gentile Writings, as Purification by Water, and this before *Homer*, or at least by him mentioned; and their making Leagues *inter vinum & epulas*, with eating and drinking.

Though indeed some men are so fansiful, that if they perceive any the least likeness between the Notions and Customs of the Jews and Gentiles, (as especially *T. G. in his Court of the Gentiles*) it must needs pass as a clear Demonstration, that therefore the Gentiles had these things *mediately*, or *immediately* from the Jews. By which means I dare undertake to make out to the reasons of men, that they may as

as well make the Hiſtory of one Nation but an imitation and corruption of the Hiſtory of another. Whereas both Jew and Gentile having the ſame natural light, might be directed thereby to many the ſame notions and like cuſtoms. I would ask whether the Gentile by the natural light of the underſtanding might not hit upon ſome truth? Elſe to what purpoſe doth that light ſerve? O what benefit is it to that part of Mankind, that had no further Directions? Then whether the Jews having the ſame light, together with the farther addition of Revelation, might not hit upon the ſame truths, whether it neceſſarily follows, that the Gentiles had this from the Jews? Again, ſince each Light directs mankind to the Belief and Worſhip of the Deity, and becauſe there can be no publick Worſhip without the appointment of perſons, time and place, to that end, whence they muſt deſcend to many particular Conſtitutions and Cuſtoms, as to theſe grand requiſites of Worſhip, whether we can in reaſon ſuppoſe that it is not likely there will be ſome ſimilitudes, as to Perſons, Habits, Sacreds, or one thing or other, between the worſhip of each, although theſe two Bodies of Men might never hear, or know any thing one of another? Whence let reaſon judge, what an irrefragable argument likeneſs of Notions, or Cuſtoms, is, to prove them all of Jewiſh Original.

Though indeed moderate and rational Diſcourſes on this Subject may much advance the Glory of Sacred Writings, yet to preſs them ſo far, as ſome have done, robs the greater part of Mankind of their very Reaſons, detrudes them into lower Species, and therefore makes them like the Beaſts that periſh; leaving them without light, without any rule of life, without Law, and conſequently without any thing whereby they may be judged at the laſt day.

But I know not how any man can deny the point before us to have been discovered by natural light, unless he will correct S. *Paul*, who affirms a Law written on our hearts by nature, and that Conscience accuses, or excuses, according as Men have kept or broke it: *Rom.* 1. 14, 15. which he speaks expressly of the Gentiles, *Who being without law*, viz. that of Revelation, *do by nature the things contained in the law, having the law written on their hearts*—— For the *presenting our selves a sacrifice holy, and acceptable to God*, is the whole substance of all the practick part of natural Religion, which being taken away, we know not where to place such Religion, unless in mere notions, or speculations; and such can be neither a *Religion*, nor a *Law*, which doth not direct, and oblige us in matters of good and evil.

Therefore the subject of, and duty pressed by the Text, being natural, and consequently a *reasonable* service, we have this advantage and incouragement to it, *viz.*

When the Gospel proposes, and presses this duty upon us, *Reason* steps in, and speaks it good and eligible, and conducive to our present and future safety. This is the main thing that makes *his commands*, as S. *John* speaks, 1 *Ep.* 5. 3. *That they are not grievous.*

For when reason can discover no good and necessity in the thing injoyned, as it is in pure positives, such as be Circumcision, Abstinencies from some sorts of Meat, and in divers other *Mosaick* Rights and Customs, nature draws back, and rejects these Precepts, as matters of toil and self-denyal, but of no advantage, which perhaps is the reason, why the breach of some Positives under the Law was more severely threatened than sin in some points, that were intrinsecally good and evil.

Whereas

Whereas when the matter of a Precept is agreeable to our Reaſons, we have an argument within, even the ſame reaſon which preſſes us to cloſe with the external Precept. And that it is ſo in this caſe, I leave even your ſelves to judge. For what is more juſt and reaſonable than this, that we ſhould *preſent our ſelves a living ſacrifice* to that God from whom we have received our Bodies, our Beings, together with all the comforts and bleſſings of them? What more fitting than that we ſhould live to his Glory, *in whom we live and move?* What more equitable, than that we ſhould obey him, to whom we do belong by all the ſacred ties of *Creation*, *Redemption*, *Dedication*, and *voluntary Reſignation* of our ſelves? This is ſo clear and undeniable a thing, that all men that have, and will uſe their reaſon, muſt ſubſcribe to it as our

Reaſonable Service.

Therefore if men will not do ſo, the diſadvantage lies here, that they ſin not only againſt Revelation, but nature too. And therefore ſhall be ſelf-condemn'd, as well as by that Judge of quick and dead. And thence go with ſhame and ſilence into thoſe miſeries that wait them, who know God, but will not call upon his name.

Therefore, if there be any Virtue, any Praiſe, any Pity and Compaſſion for your ſelves, let the importunity of ſo great an Apoſtle prevail with us in a thing ſo juſt and reaſonable.

Ibeſeech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies —— which is your reaſonable ſervice.

In fine.

One

One great reason why many live no better, and do no more good in their generations, is this, that they worship no more. Therefore S. *Paul* doth press us to the duties of the former Table, that is, to own and *present our selves a sacrifice to God*: and in case men are sincere in this one point, it will most certainly put them upon *Sobriety* and *Righteousness*, *Brotherly-kindness* and *Charity*, injoyned by the latter Table; that by this means men may be not only a Sacrifice, but also *holy and acceptable to God*. For this part of our Religion doth sweetly influence our whole lives. For this weakens corruptions, restores us more to our selves, and inables us to live up to the Rules and Dictates of right reason: and therefore disposed to all good Offices. And where men are not so much wanting in the thing, as mistaken in the ends, and motives of it, this rectifies all these errours too.

Therefore it is chiefly from hence, that men become truly kind and affable, which is not only agreeable to our natures, as we are sociable creatures, but doth also capacitate us to become the greater Benefactors to our selves, and others. For by society and converse we come to understand the world, and thereby become more capable of advancing our own, and other mens interest, and therefore by the same means mutually inable, and incourage to do good to others, as God hath done good to us.

Which is the great design of this days Assembly, as appears not only from the practises of former Stewards of this Company, who have yearly set out to Trades as many poor Children of our County of *Warwick*, as there be Stewards of the said Company, which be, in number, eight. But also from the generous inclinations of *you*, the present Stewards, who seem resolved not to fall short of any that have went before you.

And

And indeed as this is one of the firſt of all the Counties of *England*, that hath met in this nature, ſo *you* have from year to year in ſuch meaſures out-done them all, that you are looked upon as Enſamples to the reſt. So true is it of your works, as S. *Paul* ſpeaks of the *Romans* Faith, they are famous in the world. And ſince we may ſay, *you have run well*, though I do not fear it this preſent year, it is pity it ſhould ever be ſaid, *Who hath hindered you?*

For to do good, and to communicate in any way, is worthy of Men and Chriſtians. But this is certainly one of the moſt generous and beſt methods of Charity we can think of. For to relieve ſinking perſons, and Families is a very good Office, and in no wiſe ſhall miſs its reward, but is not likely to prove ſo advantageous to a Society as this; for by ſuch means we keep thoſe perſons ſo relieved from ſome meaſures of Diſtreſs, but they are never likely hereby, unleſs in ſome rare inſtance, ſo to riſe in the world, as to become ſerviceable to their Generations.

Whereas this puts poor Children, who elſe might have lay as Vaſſals, unable to help themſelves, or others, into a capacity of becoming men, and of making others ſo.

Therefore you know not how extenſive your Liberalities may prove, and what *publick* Bleſſings time and induſtry may make them; for who can ſay what great Traders, what large Eſtates, and what conſiderable Families may ſpring from theſe beginnings? Therefore as the main end of all Societies is the preſervation of the whole, which is beſt done by preſerving and advancing particulars, you do in this way *admirably* anſwer her main intendments.

And

And if we look back to former Ages, we ſhall find ſuch publick ſpirits, even in the Gentile World, that the *Roman* Orator lays it down as a common Truth, *Non nobis nati*, we are born for the good of others, as well as our own. Which principle carried ſome of them ſo far, that they deemed it a happineſs when need required,

Pro patriâ mori——

To give their lives for the Honour and Safety of that place where they firſt received them.

Much leſs then ſhould *we* be unwilling to part from ſomething of our time, and other good things that God ſhall be pleaſed to give us, for the Glory, and Advantage of our Native Soil.

And truly our County of *Warwick* is a Place ſo famous for *Antiquities*, and Marks of Honour; adorned at preſent as well as in former Ages, with ſo many *Noble* and *Gentile* Families, hath given breath to ſo many others, famous in their Generations, as even this Aſſembly in ſome good meaſure teſtifies; whoſe *Piety* and *good Works* ſo eminently appeared in former times from the vaſt number of *Religious Houſes*; and ſtill doth from the many *Hoſpitals*, *Free-Schools*, and *Augmentation of poor Vicaridges*, that in theſe things we act by the meaſures, and follow the Footſteps of our generous Anceſtors, and ſpeak our ſelves *Warwick-ſhire* Men in Nature, as well as Name.

Nor is it our Praiſe only, but our duty too, to do all the good we can. Therefore *S. John* 1 *Ep.* 4. 11. argues from God's Bounty to us, to that Bounty and Kindneſs, we owe to

to others. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* Now as God's Love discovered it self, not in a fruitless pity, but in doing those good things to us which were most suitable to our wants; as the Redemption of the World, thereby rescuing Mankind out of the hands of misery and death: so our love ought to evidence it self, not barely in compassionate Speeches, and unprofitable wishes, like him in S. *James* 2. 16. *Depart in peace, be warmed, be filled: without giving those things, that be needful for the body.* But in doing those good Offices which are most conducive to mens ease, and comfort, so far as opportunity and abilities will well allow. These are returns we make to God; and expressions of our thankfulness to him, for all the benefits he hath done unto us.

This is the way to increase our present Enjoyments, and to secure them to posterity: for S. *Paul* compares this to sowing, thereby teaching us, that what we part from in such ways, will bring us (according to what we sow, whether more or less) a plentiful Harvest, and a blessed Increase.

And truly every man that is born into the world, hath a natural right to a maintenance here, one as well another; for the world was made, not for some few persons, or Families, but for mankind in general. And though Providence hath wisely ordered divers distinctions, as to Honours and Estates, for if all were equal, none would serve, or obey others, which would necessarily run a Society into distractions, a State of War, and perhaps, into final Confusions. Yet this doth not take away any mans natural; for still a subsistance remains due, else many must be sent into the world, either to trespass upon other Rights, or else to perish at other mens pleasure; which neither Nature nor Religion

can allow. Therefore if any cannot help, or maintain themselves, they ought to be assisted by them that may. Whence Alms are somewhere called δικαιοσυνη, our *Righteousness*, thereby shewing we do but what is just, and right in giving them. And hence that Judge of the world shews these works are so acceptable to God, that they shall receive from him an everlasting Recompense. *I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: thirsty, and ye gave me drink: naked, and ye cloathed me: in prison, and ye visited me. Therefore come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.*

To which place, God of his Mercy bring us, for Jesus Christ his sake. To whom, with God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory. *Amen.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

IN Epistle 1. page 3. line 3. for yet read set. l.10. f.frame r.flame. p.4.l.17.f.deliver r.detain. Epistle 2. l.7.take out the second as. In the Sermon,p.4.l.6.f.wage r.urge p.5.l.14.f.truth r.proof. p.19.l.7.f.o r.or. p.25.l.29.after natural r.right. l.31. after other.r mens.